

April 7, 1970
Minutes of the Meeting of the Political Committee,
April, 1970

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Summary:

Discussion of the political situation in China; border issues with the Soviet Union; foreign relations, such as those with Albania, Japan, the GDR and Bulgaria; the political isolation of China; and the organization of the political party in China.

Original Language:

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Contents:

Translation - English

Strictly Confidential

AGENDA

1. a) Statement of the fraternal Parties' Central Committee International Departments on the Chinese question at the consultation held in Warsaw

Speaker: Comrade Károly Erdélyi
Invited: Comrade András Gyenes

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1. a) Statement of the fraternal Parties' Central Committee International Departments on the Chinese question at the consultation held in Warsaw

Speaker: Comrade Károly Erdélyi
Commenters: Comrades Gyula Kállai, Lajos Czinege, Jeno Fock, Sándor Gáspár, Zoltán Komócsin, Rezso Nyers and János Kádár

The Political Committee approves the Central Committee International Department statement on the work of the delegation to the Warsaw consultation on the Chinese question.

Comrades Zoltán Komócsin, Árpád Pullai and Károly Erdélyi are to ensure that an appropriately edited version of the analysis 'The Chinese Question after the IX Congress of the Communist Party of China' is published in the CC Agitprop Department Bulletin. They are to further ensure the appropriate use of the recommendations in the Memorandum Minutes, and the direction of further work concerning this question.

It is agreed that as well as Comrade Gyula Kállai, Calvinist bishop Tibor Bartha should also delegate at the international initiative committee of the European People's Peace Congress.

It agrees that after bringing the request public, and with the agreement of the Soviet comrades, Comrades Gyula Kállai and Sándor Gáspár should take steps to win the participation of appropriate persons from western European parties and trade unions in preparations for the European Security Conference.

Hungarian "Politburo" Minutes

[Pages 1-14]

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Political Committee held on 7 April 1970

1. Report on the Warsaw consultation of fraternal Parties' Central Committee International Departments on the Chinese question

Comrade GYULA KÁLLAI:

It is difficult to comment because we do not know the prepared material. But my problem is not this. I think it is correct to address the question.

Chinese international policy is mentioned on the third page. I do not think that this statement is precise enough. It is certain that the Chinese have not succeeded in their aims to bring about viable groups opposed to the Marxist-Leninist group in the international workers' movement. I do not know whether this is in the material. Unfortunately, in another regard, they have had an indirect impact.

It says on page 5: "The fraternal Parties agreed with a more detailed investigation of the Chinese situation and the imperialists' divisive tactics. On the basis of their own experiences in activating interstate relations with the Chinese, ..." etc. What does this mean precisely? Are the Soviet comrades sending an ambassador? It appears that what is even more important: Chinese behaviour is judged to have reached a dead end in this area. I don't know exactly what this means.

On page 8 Comrade Gáspár and I are given a task, I think that we will examine together with the department what must be done here.

Comrade KÁROLY ERDÉLYI:

Concerning Sino-Soviet relations, the Soviet comrades think that until they make progress, interstate relations with the Chinese should not be initiated by others. Soviet comrades have continued these discussions since October last year, with a short break. The Chinese position, or what they want, is still not clear.

Comrade LAJOS CZINEGE:

I bring a small matter in relation to the question under discussion. Here we have the Chinese diplomats. Maybe one or two of them would like to speak to someone, person-to-person. At the last reception I saw four or five of them standing together, and when a Hungarian passed by them, he turned away from them. Of course, it is difficult to find a topic [to discuss] with them, but it shouldn't be right to isolate them this much. We need to think on the personal level too. We should be careful not to upset them even with such small things.

COMRADE JENO FOCK:

This is in fact about two questions: what kind of material was compiled last year. This is roughly the same, and the material implies this as well. It also contains conclusions contradicting the most important statements of principle, which we referred to at the conference. I trust that we decided correctly on their use, and that we leave out these hasty statements.

Regarding interstate relations with the Chinese: I am deeply convinced that we are right, and do not know which Soviet comrades were referred to, who they are or whose opinions these are. I don't agree that we should welcome anything that isolates the Chinese. We should definitely be pleased that the Chinese opinion is isolated. I think it a correct position that the Chinese and their incorrect opinions are isolated everywhere, not only in the socialist countries.

The Soviet Union has been negotiating with them on the border issue and other taut questions, and until there is agreement, no socialist country should set about improving interstate relations - I think that is not the Marxist-Leninist position.

What sort of interstate relations exist? We only have embassies there, no trade relations. Shouldn't we now look after trade relations? Because via economic, interstate and trade relations we can better maintain more intensive relations. This is one thread towards - without acknowledging that the Chinese are right in part - maintaining relations. This is true for other aspects of interstate relations as well. We also spoke about Albania. We can amble along, make attempts. But conditions can come into play here, the Albanians currently have no relations whatsoever with the Soviet Union, and so the others should do nothing. I submit that the official Soviet position is correct, that we should build relations. Indeed, we have been encouraged to undertake the re-export of Soviet goods. This is why I do not understand when the Soviet comrades ask us not to try with China. I feel some distrust here. They should trust us! I see one improvement, at the reception: the Chinese diplomats were pleased to exchange words just the same with them as with others.

Comrade SÁNDOR GÁSPÁR:

It was correct to hold this meeting on this question. I think it is good that we have a unified assessment. Now for the next step. I think that the proposal regarding Albania is this: leaders of the International Departments should convene in a similar manner in 1971. It would be worthwhile to accelerate and bring forward this process.

Comrade ZOLTÁN KOMÓCSIN:

I have read this material a number of times. We did not circulate it because of its dimensions, and because it doesn't say anything new, according to my judgment, to the Political Committee. These are well-known statements. The great advantage to the material is the same so far: it brings together our own information, Soviet information, articles etc., and brings them together well. I think that this better than the two earlier materials. Not only because it brings together collective experiences, but because of its decisive characteristic: it truly tries to give a consistent analysis of principle and policy. There is a logical commentary on principle and policy. I have the impression that they may have pasted in the parts we object to (?) Comrade Erdélyi raised this, but without result. The tactic employed against us was that the Bulgarians and the GDR brought an even worse, more left-wing proposal. We can see from this that such a consultation is not yet as it should be. But there has been some development even here, although they did not accept those sensible proposals we made.

It is true that the material is limited to only a few pages, it has no answer for the question whether Mao has gone mad, or what happened. The situation there is not the fault of socialism; objective reasons are instrumental in how they ended up. This must be studied in more depth. We also try to do something consistent with our own path. From this point of view, this is a big plus against all the earlier material and promises much for the future, although we are still at the stage of raising questions.

If the Political Committee accepts this proposal, we shall publish it with our editorial amendments. It will help our propaganda to date.

Unfortunately, the situation is unchanged, this was still a theoretical symposium, and other than ourselves, nobody has raised which tasks would be necessary in this respect. We have become isolated. It was assumed natural that there would be debate in this circle. The International Department leaders do not have to produce propaganda material, although they can do so.

Considering the essence, Comrade Erdélyi raised what Comrade Fock said, our political position. I see that this general line in fact prevails among the Soviet comrades, the essence of which is that whether it is the German question, the

Japanese question, on the matter of China or Albania, they find it reassuring if they negotiate themselves. They are not afraid that our internal leadership continues talks, nor would I say that they are distrustful. They have a certain reserve and do not know who is talking on our side. So it is more reassuring if they can hold talks. This gives rise to a truly bad situation. We are therefore partly isolated and we also miss a series of unexplored opportunities and give this terrain to others. Kuznetsov is sitting there in Peking and cannot produce any results. But for us, who represent the shared line and could represent Soviet interests, we have no such opportunity. I think that this is the general line. This line presents a serious problem, which is revealed not only in connection with China, but with relations with the German Social Democratic Party, and relations with the Japanese, we have ended up in such a strange situation where everything was set in advance. It was correct for us to step down. We wanted to serve the common cause. Even the Japanese were surprised at this. Moreover they go on about preparations for the anti-imperialist world congress, and we have already lost a step. This entire line, and its rigidity culminates most visibly in the Albanian matter. The Soviet comrades initiated talks on the Albanian matter as well. We looked through the Political Committee's decision and comrade Erdélyi went there prepared. What happened there was that they attacked us systematically on the question the Soviets had asked us to address: they asked us to take up relations with the Albanians and negotiate their exports. Moreover, the situation was favorable because the Albanians had requested the same. We spoke to the Albanians and reported to Moscow. And the consequence to all of this was that we were exposed to political attack. Comrade Erdélyi was systematically attacked at this meeting, and he was forced to reject it. Although they apologized to him in front of the plenum, this is what happened. The main thing is that the Soviet comrades blew this off. They thought at first that we would assuage the Albanians, taking over the connection with them from the Chinese, but what happened was that the Albanians "assuaged" the Soviet Union. It cannot be presumed that the Albanians are able to do this. This is not the point. Now, however, the situation is that our endeavors to date were all for nothing. In this regard, an agreed division of labor is needed to decide what to do. We are at a dead end.

It is not possible to judge for certain whether this is the position of the CPSU Central Committee. One comrade, who took part in the meeting, is a member of the Central Committee, and the other is an expert on far eastern affairs. These are responsible people. I do not think they would have done it without the approval of their superiors, the Secretariat. I think that maybe this should be discussed with the Soviet comrades at the Central Committee secretarial level.

Finally, concerning European security: this was also discussed, although it is also in the next material. I propose that the Political Committee accept these proposals. It was clear that the matter concerning the anti-imperialist congress is in a bad way. These proposals are aimed at us putting as much strength we have into elevating the matter from the present situation.

Comrade REZSO NYERS:

I agree with the opinion we represented at the meeting. At the same time, I regard as correct the opinion that this agreement did not mean giving up our views, in so far as they did not persuade us. I think that an ideologically sharp struggle must be fought against the Chinese position. At the same time, I think it incorrect to place a mark of equality between ideological struggle and political struggle. And to say that ideologically, they falsify Marxism, and it is here in the analysis too, to make certain that politically, they belong to the imperialists - this would not be correct. Politically, China cannot be erased from the world map, nor can the Communist Party of China be erased from the map of the international communist movement. It is true that the action launched by Mao et. al. five years ago was not successful. They didn't succeed. And it's good they didn't succeed! Their political influence over the Japanese, but primarily the Vietnamese party is fairly large, but less than before. The Vietnamese

are cultivating relations with us, but [the Chinese] influence has not ceased completely. It is very good that politically they are with us and have not split.

The ideological struggle must be sharp, but politically, and on the interstate level, the only conclusion we can draw is that we cannot naturally come to agreement with China on every question. But we must seek agreement with them on every question again.

We must look at what is in the ideological material. It is correct to make it public, it is certain that what is in these hundred pages is basically good, but it's also certain that it cannot be the plan for ideological action. We must be careful with statements such as the Party has been liquidated in China.

They undertake a confused reorganization, and it's possible that they will liquidate [the Party], but for the time being have not done so. After all the position is that we accept and circulate [the material], and at the same time continue to represent our position at international communist forums. Politically, we must come to agreement with China, but only on concrete questions. The CPSU cannot bring together these economic and political opinions in one. I agree that we should endeavor to normalize interstate relations in the agreed way, and with Albania too, but we should always try to make clear that we are together with the Soviet Union! A subtle approach will be better.

It is hereafter correct that we stick to our position to date.

Comrade JÁNOS KÁDÁR:

I find the statement acceptable.

We have touched on the Albanian question, an independent question, but which also depends largely on the Chinese question.

The European security conference was mentioned, we need to address this elsewhere, because we cannot deal with it in a footnote. What we have here is, in theory, correct.

There is an essential question to be clarified regarding the conference of European peoples. Unfortunately two matters somehow run independently. One is what we have been driving in day-to-day politics: the security conference. The other is the people's conference. To me, this means that the people's conference would exert influence on governments. Here time is quite important, how we want to harmonize the two, when, and which one we prioritize. It is possible - and we only need to discuss it - that we see this security conference as a structure, and still endeavor to bring about a meeting this year. I understand this, if it is being said. Or if it is clear that in the present situation we cannot convene a state-level meeting, and then we prioritize the people's conference. But then we should know this, otherwise we end up in a ridiculous situation. I only mention this because these questions remain open. I think it is a question of continuous consultation.

Regarding the Chinese question: what should I say? In the international communist movement, in fact in global politics it is the greatest question, that is to say, it is a problem. In the negative sense. And will be so for a long time! Naturally, we must address it. The meeting of the seven Parties should be regarded as a meeting in which the Parties are unified in their judgment of the Chinese question. The seven Parties are from those socialist countries that are also particularly interested in state-to-state relations and can not sidestep the question.

It is certainly true, ideologically speaking too, that we reject Maoism, politically and also in state policy, because we condemn everything the Chinese do, motivated in part by nationalism, with the socialist countries at the level of interstate relations. The seven Parties are therefore unified on this.

Regarding the rest, it is clear that there is no complete unity. This is because we have not yet truly completed the analytical work. And there is no complete unity because there are different opinions on the question. These are differences of opinion that relate to questions of tactics, and not the strategic end goal. The point is that the Chinese communists, the People's Republic of China must be brought back onto the common path. This is the strategic goal! On this we are agreed. The rest is a question of tactics, although this is very important in day-to-day politics, but still a question of tactics. We should remember this in future.

Regarding the present consultation meeting, I agree with comrade Komócsin. Although I am in a situation where I know there is nothing new from the last material, but there has been some serious progress, a unified spirit is reflected in the fundamental questions. The material is an improvement on the earlier material, and useful work has been done with this consultation too. Our representatives acted in accordance with our position and we acknowledge this.

The resolutions can be supported, we should take note - the minutes, the analytical material etc. - that greater agreement is necessary, further consultation and so on. These can be accepted. In the sense that we must fully examine the material, and only those parts should be left out that have to be left out, but we should make use of the material. I personally welcome that the fundamental questions have been included in the agenda. A proper Marxist analysis is needed, it must be shown where these matters arise. There are historical and social reasons, and only on the basis of these can we work it out.

Regarding relations, I agree with comrade Czinege, in the sense that we always said that civilized people must behave worthily, and we cannot not shake hands with people we invite to receptions, because civilized behaviour compels us to deal with them. But we cannot pin confident hopes on this. Still, neither should we offend these people personally, or make an already bad situation worse.

What about interstate relations?

Here, two things must be taken into account. We need a Marxist analysis, a strategy and tactics. This is necessary. But I'd also like to mention what has already been discussed many times: there are strategy and tactics on the other side too. It's not only us who has tactics, but also the Chinese. When did open war break out? In April 1960? This was the first "gunshot", fired by the Chinese, the second was the meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions. Comrades will recall that this was the first occasion when they offended all norms, speaking at a plenum where people from 18 fraternal Parties were present as trade union functionaries. At this meeting, the Chinese called the 18 Parties revisionist. Their assault did not succeed. They drew the consequences from this. There was a second international gathering to do with a meeting in Rome, where they condemned 20 fraternal Parties as revisionists. Then they learned from experience the reaction of the western parties, and reduced the scope of attacks. They restricted the entire encounter to the CPSU and Soviet Union. This is not a matter of principle, but of tactics. This has been the case with the Chinese since. We cannot imagine what will happen, in terms of ideological struggle, political struggle, and interstate relations, if China continues its anti-Soviet struggle, branding the CPSU as revisionist and a class traitor, saying its activities will lead to the restitution of bourgeois power in the Soviet Union, saying the Soviet Union is not a socialist state but a bourgeois dictatorship, which is why they do not trade with it, they do not share or create culture, they are only at war, firing at the borders, etc. -

so that they will be in good comradely relations with the other Parties of the socialist world. This is unimaginable. The People's Republic of Hungary is among the targets of Maoism, the HSWP is a target, they want to destroy it as well. They mention it today, but do not mention it tomorrow, depending on what they regard as important tactically. I do not want to say that nothing can happen. If there is no change in the Soviet-Chinese situation, it will be difficult to proceed. We can only proceed with shared and agreed tactics, a strategic struggle. If they succeed in somehow separating the Soviet Union from the socialist world, then what would be important to them next would be how to deal with the remainder. This is not a Marxist position. This is my opinion.

It is good that the Soviet Union is uneasy, I understand this. It is a large country, the world's largest socialist country, and in fact [the Chinese] call it an enemy. It looks as if it is on the brink of war, so why shouldn't they be uneasy? Aren't they uneasy because of what has already happened in this struggle, and the Chinese continue their tactics? We cannot be angry at them for this. I do not agree that we should harden, we always fought to stop excommunication, they cannot make us do anything. We are not fighting just to put labels on something. The correctness of this position was reflected at the Moscow meeting.

Regarding the essence of the matter, what is definitive: how Chinese intentions relate to the Soviet Union. To their eyes, we are just puppets. There was that case when comrade Sándor and others went there with a Party delegation, and the then president of the republic tried to convince them that "an atom bomb would be no good for you", etc. They think we are clowns. The Chinese do this sort of thing too. This should not be forgotten. Discussions are needed with the Soviet Union, with the 7 parties, with the 67 parties, whatever the situation demands. If the Soviet Union accepts that we act similarly against Chinese tactics, then we do so.

The Chinese intention is not honest in this matter, the Soviet Union will only be uneasy, so what should we do? This is not about having to take such a step tomorrow. We must always do what helps the strategic goal, and avoid everything that weakens us. It is good to avoid armed conflict.

It is true that they are isolated, but China is still in the world, it can influence, it employs fantastic methods, has kept people in prison for years, Party representatives, there are those who haven't seen another living person in seven years. It uses methods like giving gold coins to delegates. The Chinese do all this without hesitation, saying "the ends justify the means". All of this must naturally be taken into account. The point now is that the Soviet Union will perhaps send an ambassador there. We do not know whether he will get approval. We must take real care not to break diplomatic relations with them over their behavior with our allies. There was some discussion between Kosygin and Zhou Enlai after the death of Ho Chi Minh. What brought them to this? Can anyone say? They recognized that they were isolated but still decided that a shared Marxism-Leninism was better? Who can say? Discussions are at a dead end, and since then nothing has happened. Despite this I think it of great value that both sides have taken steps to establish contact. The Soviet Union took up the idea from six months ago - or at least I think so - that there should be envoys in both countries. I don't know how the Chinese will react. I welcome this step from the Soviet Union, it is the tool of flexible policy. This is how to proceed in every area.

We must continue to adhere to our position that defines our behavior towards the People's Republic of China at the state level. We have swallowed many insults, and acknowledge this silently only to maintain diplomatic relations and economic contacts; the argument continues hopelessly at the level of party relations, they think we are stupid and insult us even if we are polite to them. We fight for the annual economic discussions, and if the Chinese made a proposal, we did not ignore it. This is what we have done so far, and will do in future. Of course, a great initiative cannot

come about. If they initiate something we will always proceed properly and adopt it, we won't say that they are traitors to the working class, that we won't trade with them, instead we say we'll adopt it, report back, study, etc.

The harder line in the material: if we'd discussed it, maybe it would have been better, maybe not. But it reflects the position of the seven Parties. It's uneven, because the work has not been carried through. It must not be regarded as bad, because if we look at what the HSWP position is, what tactical steps would have been correct for the Chinese, an even more convoluted picture would have come out. I don't think the situation has been completely clarified. I think that a slightly edited, improved version of the material would assist Comrades' understanding, particularly if we don't stop here but rely on it. We have propagandists, teachers who should rely on this material and expound the HSWP position in intelligent presentations. We have periodicals, Social Review [Társadalmi Szemle], Party Life [Pártélet] in which we can expound and argue our position, etc. We should make it plain that we do not agree with the Maoists, then elsewhere we don't have to state it, because this is natural. Our intensive engagement with this question has been missing. We cannot satisfy public opinion by continuously saying nothing for almost two years, followed by all sorts of thunder. Our struggle here must be tenacious and patient. Of course, I agree with what comrade Gáspár said, the ultimate problem is what to do. We hope that shared work, analysis, examination and coordination will always shape up better in the future, in the spheres of ideological work, propaganda and interstate relations. In this respect, I agree with the report. I propose more intensive engagement with this question in the future.

I also want to say that one opportunity remains open to us. There is no point in saying that the formula is the way it is, that we/they [meaning unclear] are isolated, etc. This is a closed consultation, I cannot change the formula if I want to leave out something from what I say, although there is much truth in this. This material should perhaps be published in an abbreviated form.

Comrade ZOLTÁN KOMÓCSIN:

This is more balanced in the material.

Comrade JÁNOS KÁDÁR:

We have now heard the statement and discussed it, and in theory it is in the power of the Political Committee to turn to the Central Committees of the six fraternal Parties and say: we have heard the statement, we welcome this and that, and regard it necessary to remark on this and that. I do not suggest that we take this opportunity, but there is no other way. There's no point in talking politics about this text. I think that what has come out of the seven Parties' discussions is the best possible. We can always lay out our position on the Chinese question and bring it to attention of the six fraternal Parties. This is not a proposal, I just mention it.